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POLITICS & INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS | RESEARCH ARTICLE

The strategic and political consequences of the June 1967 war

Dimitrios Machairas^{1,2*}

Abstract: This article analyses the direct, relatively immediate strategic and political consequences of the 1967 Arab-Israeli War, focusing on Israel's post-war security situation, the connection of the Six-Day War with the next episodes of the Arab-Israeli conflict, and on important and relevant to the issue political realities emerging in the affected societies, such as the Palestinian national movement and refugee problem, the rise of Islam, and the Jewish colonisation of the occupied territories. It highlights the multicausality of its origins and the sequentiality of its implications, whose extent and scale led to it being widely considered a turning point for its belligerents and the Middle East in general. Its far-reaching effects are connected as in a chain, extending to the present. The article concludes that the Six-Day War was indeed a decisive moment of great historical significance, yet not a true turning point in the technical sense.

Subjects: Middle East Politics; War & Conflict Studies; World Military History; Civil Wars & Ethnic Conflict

Keywords: Six Day War; June 1967 war; Arab-Israeli conflict; Islamism; Israeli settlement; Palestinian national movement; Palestinian refugee problem

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PUBLIC INTEREST STATEMENT

Was the June 1967 War a "turning point" in the Arab-Israeli conflict, as many think? Fifty years later, a look at the enduring political and military-strategic realities that resulted from one of the shortest wars in history can suggest that this was not the case. Analysing the string of causes and effects linking the unstable pre-war situation with the far-reaching consequences of the war's outcome, and what lies in between, this article examines a range of strategic and political issues whose intractability extends to the present. With the Six-Day War, we see pre-existing elements of the regional state of affairs, like Israeli military and political predominance over Palestine, the absence of a Palestinian ethnic state, and the ever fluid interplay between Islamism and Arab nationalism, simply being given additional fuel and the opportunity to consolidate and intensify, rather than a fundamental change of direction towards resolution.

Grievances, hostility, crisis, military operations, political upheavals and change, transformation of the cultural landscape; this is what any war usually consists of. The 1967 Arab-Israeli War was in this respect a typical war, but due to the extent and scale of its implications, it is widely considered as a turning point for its belligerents and the Middle East in general. This article analyses the direct, relatively immediate strategic and political consequences of the war, focusing on Israel's post-war security situation, the connection of the Six-Day War with the next episodes of the Arab-Israeli conflict, and on important and relevant to the issue political realities emerging in the affected societies, such as the Palestinian national movement and refugee problem, the rise of Islam, and the Jewish colonisation of the occupied territories. Multicausality characterises its origins and sequentiality its implications. Its far-reaching effects are connected as in a chain, extending to the present. The article will conclude that the Six-Day War was a decisive moment of indeed great historical significance, rather than a true turning point in the technical sense.

1. The background: Context, operations and tallies

The sudden eruption of the June 1967 War may have stunned the world like a blazing comet falling on earth, but the backdrop was already one of Egyptian militarism, Syrian-Israeli border clashes and superpower politics; one could say that all the “right” ingredients were there waiting for the timely spark. Nasser's Egypt, increasingly militarist and interventionist since the Algerian War of Independence, had embarked on yet another populist crusade supporting the republican coup d'état against the royalists in Yemen, and in the spring of 1967, was still bogged down in the stale-mated civil war there. However preoccupied with this impasse Egypt might be at the time, such an overseas military engagement in itself should have been considered indicative of a type of mindset which often contributes to the escalation of rivalries.

On the other hand, long-lasting disputes between Israel and Syria had recently given rise to increasing tensions involving from belligerent declarations to military action like bombings and air fights. Three thorns in the two countries' bilateral relations were fuelling their mutual confrontational attitude, one being water politics—leading to exchanges of fire and the destruction of Syrian vehicles and machinery on various occasions—regarding the Sea of Galilee, from which Israel was determined to divert water by constructing a pipeline all the way south to the Negev desert in order to help develop and populate an area of vital strategic importance, while Syria tried to counter this project by diverting the water before it entered Israeli territory. Furthermore, Syrian committed support to Palestinian guerrillas, who frequently engaged in raids in Israeli territory, prompted, on the part of Israel, tough language and retaliatory attacks intended to compel Syria to change its policy, a type of response that succeeded only in feeding the escalating rhetoric and animosity. Thirdly, Israel's revisionist stance, which aimed at challenging the status of the areas west of the 1923 international borders which Syria after the 1948 war had initially controlled and then relinquished on the agreement that they are demilitarised, provoked numerous military confrontations, in the most serious of which Syria lost six of its fighter planes in an air battle over Damascus on April 7, 1967.

Amidst such a volatile atmosphere, Egypt and Syria are warned by the Soviet Union on May 13 that, based on intelligence, Israel is preparing for an attack on Syria, concentrating 10 to 12 brigades on its borders. As a response, Nasser begins deploying forces into the Sinai desert and sends Chief of Staff General Muhammad Fawzi to Syria with orders to assess the situation and organize a combined reaction to Israel's impending attack, in accordance to the defence pact signed by the two countries on November 4, 1966. Although Fawzi ascertained no signs of an Israeli mobilisation, Egyptian troops continued to amass in the Sinai, while the UN decided the complete withdrawal of its Emergency Force, positioned after the 1956 war on the Egyptian side of the borders as a symbolic, at least, protector of peace between the two belligerents, in an unwise response to Nasser's request for a partial withdrawal—specifically from Rafah to Eilat—which was followed by an equally imprudent decision by Nasser to declare that the Straights of Tiran would be henceforth closed to Israel's ships, an action considered by Israel as a *casus belli*. The next few days were marked by the signing of an Egyptian-Jordanian mutual defence pact, which committed them to help each other in case either one was attacked, as well as by Egypt's and Israel's eager attempts to secure from the Soviet

Union and the US respectively the green light to strike first. While Egypt was firmly instructed not to attack first, Israel eventually received ambiguous responses by US officials, which encouraged it to decide to go to war.

The actual fighting lasted much less than the immediate pre-war crisis, as six days were enough for Israel to defeat three opponents. The war started on the morning of June 5 with a surprise attack by the Israeli Air Force, which crippled Egypt's air force along with its ability to support land operations. Without air cover, the Egyptian ground forces in the Sinai collapsed before the Israeli offensive and quickly retreated towards the Suez Canal in complete disarray. At the same time on the eastern front, which had opened when Jordan began offensive operations in the aid of its ally, Israel was capturing the West Bank and Jerusalem, after dealing a similarly severe blow to the enemy air force. The confrontation between Israel and Syria did not start until June 9, after victory was secured on the other two fronts, and resulted in the Israeli occupation of the Golan Heights.

This was one war in which numbers perhaps do tell the whole story. Military casualties were proportioned approximately 25–1 in Israel's favour, between 10 and 15 thousand men for Egypt (with 5 thousand more listed as missing), 700 for Jordan, 450 for Syria, and just 800 for Israel, which also held 5,000 Egyptians, 365 Syrians and 550 Jordanians prisoners of war, as opposed to only 15 Israeli POW's. The disparity of the war's cost for each side was even more overwhelming in material terms: 85% of Egypt's military equipment, \$2 billion worth, was destroyed, with 320 tanks, 480 guns, 2 surface-to-air missile batteries and 10 thousand vehicles passing to Israeli hands. Jordan lost 179 tanks, 1,062 guns and more than 3 thousand vehicles, with Syrian numbers being 118, 470, and 1,200 respectively. Over the course of the war, Israel's air force, in a stunning demonstration of air power, had managed to destroy a total of 469 enemy aircraft—of which 50 in dogfights—including 85% of Egypt's combat planes and all its bombers, while losing 36 planes and 18 pilots of its own [All figures in Oren (2003, pp. 305–306)]. “David and Goliath” replayed once again.

2. The strategic consequences: Defensive depth and vulnerabilities

Even more impressive than the above “scoreboard” of the war were the territorial gains Israel had achieved within such a short amount of time. It had conquered the Sinai Peninsula, the Gaza Strip, the West Bank and the Golan Heights, 42,000 square miles in total, and was now stretching over an area more than three times its pre-war size. With the addition of these lands, Israel was now, literally, within striking distance from its enemies' capitals, 110 km from Cairo, 50 km from Amman, and 60 km from Damascus. Besides the symbolic importance of this proximity, the occupied lands represented a vital space, which has been widely considered of great strategic value, as a buffer zone providing protection from immediate threats and increased time for reaction.¹ Most revealing of the military rationale regarding the importance of these areas for Israel was a US Joint Chiefs of Staff memorandum to the Secretary of Defense, dated 29 June 1967, which evaluated them based on established tactical principles like control of commanding terrain, use of natural obstacles and provision of defence in-depth: in the West Bank, control of the high ground that runs north-south east of Jerusalem provided Israel a shorter and more defensible border line, widening, at the same time, the narrow portion of the country with additional space for the defence of Tel Aviv; possession of the Golan Heights deprived Syria of easy military access to northern Israel and would limit terrorist raids and border incidents; similarly, occupation of the Gaza Strip would eliminate the terrorist threat operating from there, as well as Egypt's salient into Israel, shortening the hostile border by a factor of five; finally, with the Sinai, Israel secured protection of the geographically vulnerable port of Eilat and free access through the Straights of Tiran (Memorandum for the Secretary of Defense, 1984, pp. 124–125). Israeli decision-makers were, of course, well aware of the new strategic reality and the contrast to the 1949 lines, which were deemed “indefensible”, granting Arabs topographical and territorial advantages, tempting them towards aggression and exposing Israel to danger.² After the war, the security concern gained considerably in emphasis in terms of Israel's stance regarding permanent borders: secure, defensible borders were now at least equally important to recognized borders, and if both were not possible, secure ones were more preferable (Lidén, 1979, pp. 117, 122).

Although the Arab-Israeli conflict did not begin in 1967, the June war was particularly responsible for exacerbating it, bringing about further hostilities as a direct consequence of its result. For, the new military and strategic balance was a double-edged sword for Israel, bound to increase the long-term threats to its security as much as it had decreased the short-term one. As early as June 29, Moshe Dayan was hinting to the looming danger when he stated that “we are ... less than 100 km from Cairo, Damascus, Amman, and Beirut. We have no aggressive intentions. But our presence along these borders ... is more than just a challenge to the countries around us—it virtually imperils their foundations” (Quoted in Gera, 1992, p. 234). The War of Attrition, fought along the Suez Canal for two years until the cease-fire of 7 August 1970, was the first manifestation of the chain reaction initiated by the 1967 war, whose politically inconclusive character meant that the Egyptians could not leave Israel to consolidate its gains and gradually legitimise the military *faits accomplis* (Khalidi, 1973, p. 61). Egypt, swiftly rearmed by the Soviet Union, was able to draw Israel into a costly war aimed at exploiting the latter’s traditionally low casualty tolerance and its inability to sustain prolonged mobilisation. By occupying the Sinai and choosing to defend just at the edge of the canal, along the Bar Lev Line of fortifications, the Israelis were exposed to Egyptian provocation through the use of artillery shelling, commando raids, and eventually large-scale air operations, suffering a total of 400 casualties in addition to the economic costs imposed by the skyrocketing defence budget, as well as the significant blow to their sense of self-confidence.³

Egypt’s aspirations in the War of Attrition may not have been as ambitious as reversing the outcome of the June war yet, but the vicious circle set in motion by the new strategic status quo would be reflected in the outbreak of war once again in 1973. In November 1967, Nasser was reaffirming the “three no’s” issued by the Khartoum Arab Summit Conference two months earlier—no peace, no recognition and no negotiation with Israel—in assuring his National Assembly that “that which was taken by force will be regained by force” (Quoted in Oren, 2003, p. 326). Whether mere rhetoric or expression of firm belief, this statement is perhaps the most fitting subtitle of his successor’s surprise attack on Israel on 6 October 1973, at least in terms of its objective. Egypt’s ultimate goal was to repair the damage inflicted in 1967 to its domestic credibility and international prestige, and to force a situation that was ripe for negotiations and a settlement with Israel, not to destroy it (Halliday, 2005, p. 119). The Yom Kippur War, claiming the lives of 2,500 Israelis and between 8,000 and 18,000 Arabs, was apparently as inconclusive in military terms as the 1967 war was in political terms, ending with Israeli territorial gains west of the Suez Canal and in the Golan Heights, and Egyptian gains east of the canal. Sadat’s objective, however, would be realised six years later with the March 1979 Egyptian-Israeli Peace Treaty by which his country formally recognised the state of Israel in return for the Sinai Peninsula.

3. The political consequences

3.1. Optimism versus set-backs

The 1967 war reshaped the Middle East, with far-reaching implications on the political sphere on both the domestic and international level. In Israel, the conquest of vast territories, including the Biblical homeland, had a multidimensional impact. It boosted Israelis’ self-confidence and strengthened the Jewish element of their national identity.⁴ It also brought demographic and economic growth for Israel, with beneficial effects on the conquered communities as well, decreasing, in the Gaza Strip for example, unemployment and raising the standards of living, due to the new interrelationship between the Israeli and the local economies.⁵ At the same time, it reinforced the idea of a “Greater Israel”, giving additional political strength to expansionist right-wingers and to religious fundamentalists, who saw the war’s amazing outcome as a sign of God’s providence and their nation’s divinely sanctioned destiny, and thus led the way for the settlement of the occupied lands while fervently opposing accommodation with the Arabs.⁶ As a result, it immediately caused an internal polarisation of the Israeli society regarding the possible return of the conquered territories, and, by seemingly eliminating the existential threat to Israel’s security, it allowed the re-emergence of underlying political divisions (Bregman, 2010, pp. 92–93).

On the international level, there were winners and losers, too. In the context of the Cold War, the general impression that Soviet-armed Arabs had been crushed by Western-armed Israel was unavoidable. The war marked the beginning of a profound strengthening of American-Israeli relations and consolidated Israel's alignment with the West: after its victory, Israel became for the US a desirable strategic ally in the region, consequently enjoying their firm support and encouragement in its future military engagements in the October War and the invasion of Lebanon in 1982 (Halliday, 2005, pp. 116–117). This alliance also allowed Israel to re-evaluate and restructure its war preparation and fiscal strategies in light of the increased security needs after the 1967 war, abandoning its previous independence and self-reliance and relying on foreign aid, in order to avoid the domestic restraints and political costs associated with a rising defence budget (Barnett, 1990, pp. 550, 553, 560–561).

At the same time, US influence in the Middle East grew at the expense of the Soviet position there, bringing diplomatic leverage with the Arabs, who acknowledged the fact that US military assistance to Israel enabled the latter's qualitative superiority and, thus, shaped the whole regional balance of power (Gera, 1992, p. 241). In contrast, the Soviets had just seen their arms, at the hands of the Arab variant of their political regime and ideology, lose a decisive battle. Their prestige among the Arabs, therefore, suffered a severe blow in both a military and political sense, and they gradually lost their Egyptian foothold in the region.⁷ Their response, in addition to the massive rearmament of and economic assistance to their allies, was to engage in an extensive propaganda campaign, in which the Soviet press overemphasised favourable facts while downplaying criticism and unflattering aspects of the war, and promoted an image of the USSR as the sole supporter and defender of Arab anti-imperialist struggle, managing to recover some of its prestige in the Arab world, even strengthening its position in Syria and Libya.⁸ The war had serious political and economic consequences for the United Kingdom as well. Arab allegations that American and British aircraft had provided air support to Israel's military operations caused a number of Arab states, including Syria and Iraq, to cease diplomatic relations with the UK, and impose an oil embargo, which was only lifted after intense refutation of these claims combined with the lack of supporting evidence; the closure of the Suez Canal, however, increased oil transport costs and led to the devaluation of sterling towards the end of the same year, continuing to plague British shipping for eight whole years, until June 1975, (Brenchley, 2005, pp. 48–50, 124).

3.2. Disempowerment versus opportunity

On the other hand, the Arabs began to realise that they were unable to destroy Israel and liberate Palestine militarily, and started settling for less absolute goals—as the Khartoum Summit revealed—like the liberation of the recently lost lands (Gera, 1992, p. 242; Oren, 2003, p. 322). The war had discredited the nationalist and socialist ideology in the Arab world beyond repair, precipitating the end of the most prominent expression of this ideology, Nasserism, as a model for Arab unity and struggle against Zionism and Western colonialism, especially in Egypt itself.⁹

What replaced this model was a reinvigorated Islamism, and the outcome of the 1967 War was what gave the spur to a revival of fundamentalism. The aforementioned zeal which accompanied religious interpretations of the war by Jews in Israel, as well as by Christians in the US and elsewhere, was met, on the Arab side, by the idea that adoption of foreign ideologies and abandonment of the faith had brought the overwhelming military defeat as a form of severe punishment; Islamism was promoted as the only source of resistance and power against an indifferent and cynical, if not negatively biased international community, and an increasingly powerful and religiously self-identified Israel (Haddad, 1992, p. 267). Earlier efforts towards a revival and reformation of the faith in the 20th century were relatively progressive in character and more attuned to either liberalism and Western principles or a socialist ideology, as they were supposed to address an internal decadence in the context of a repressive, yet missionary and morally-cloaked colonial rule (Haddad, 1992, pp. 272–273). The new reality, however, represented a far more intolerable, nakedly oppressive challenge, and in this respect, the 1967 war gave increased relevance and a new impetus to pre-existing calls for an Islamic awakening, only this time, it would be a renewal of the faith that aspired, as Yvonne Haddad has put it, “to Islamize modernity, rather than modernize Islam”.¹⁰

The shift in Israel from a more secular Zionism to one that sought to legitimise the retention of the occupied lands through reference to the Bible, combined with specific actions and policies of the Israeli authorities—like the transportation of 200,000 Arabs from Jerusalem and the West Bank to Jordan, the incorporation of those who remained into the Israeli educational, tax and legal systems, the annexation of Jerusalem and its environs, the demolition or confiscation of Arab property, and the control and use of Muslim holy places—reinforced the idea that Israel was attempting a Judaisation of the conquered land and necessitated efforts to document the Arab-Islamic heritage of the area as a response (Haddad, 1992, pp. 275–280). At the same time, ideas of a Judeo-Christian conspiracy, references to the Crusades, and criticism of the failure of the international community to intervene and rectify what was seen as Israeli aggression and a major injustice were all used to push for Islamisation and jihad (Ibid., pp. 280–283).

Even while undermining nationalist ideology across the Arab world, the 1967 war, however, had exactly the opposite effect on the Palestinian national movement. Being dispersed and lacking a central, official organisation after the first Arab-Israeli war, contained and checked by the neighbouring Arab states, the Palestinians were in practice politically decapitated. Even when the Palestinian Liberation Organisation was founded in 1964—on the initiative of Nasser, who essentially appointed the person that would be its leader, Ahmed al-Shuqayri—it was more or less to function as an instrument for the control and use of the Palestinian national movement by the Arab states, and especially Egypt, and for the incorporation of their cause into an overall Arab agenda.

The war changed this context by eliminating significant restraints to the emergence of the Palestinians as an independent political force. First, it eased both the physical and ideological control of the Arab governments, which were now militarily shattered and politically discredited (Halliday, 2005, p. 121). This presented a great opportunity for Palestinian guerrilla groups to assert themselves, and Fatah was the most eager to exploit it, in order to forestall any potential peace settlement, in which it believed Palestinians would not be allowed to participate independently (Sayigh, 1992, pp. 245–246). Consequently, the guerrillas decided to launch an armed insurrection against Israel, beginning with Fatah's operation in the West Bank on 28 August 1967. Although this attempt failed to ever qualify as a fully-fledged, let alone successful resistance campaign, it nevertheless elevated the stature of the guerrilla movement in the eyes of the Palestinian people vis-a-vis the PLO as the only force mounting an active resistance against the Israeli occupation (Ibid., pp. 257, 264–265). With a growing public support and increased influence with Arab governments, the guerrillas improved their relations with the PLO—which they initially saw for what it was, i.e. an obstacle to their aspirations—with Yasser Arafat's Fatah eventually gaining leadership of the organisation in February 1969 and establishing it as a major, and for the first time independent political actor in the region, destined to play a crucial role in the destabilisation of Jordan and the breakout of the Lebanese civil war in 1975 (Halliday, 2005, p. 121; Sayigh, 1992, pp. 261–265).

3.3. Displacement versus colonisation

On another dimension of the new Arab realities, a major consequence of the 1967 war was perhaps to give the Palestinian refugee problem its intractable status by initiating an extensive alteration of the region's demographics. Immediately after the end of hostilities, Arab residents of the occupied lands were leaving their homes in thousands, an exodus that involved, 200,000 Palestinians from the West Bank, between 80,000 and 100,000 Syrians from the Golan Heights, and 55,000 Egyptians and Palestinians from the Gaza Strip and Sinai, a total of about 350,000 of the 1,400,000 inhabitants who lived there; many of them were already refugees from the 1948 war (Figures in Amos, 1979, p. 68). Although in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank Highlands the movement involved less than 25% of the existing population, on the Golan and in the West Jordan Valley there was almost complete settlement desertion (Harris, 1978, p. 312).

Whether officially encouraged by Israel or not, as Arabs were claiming, the displacement of so many people and the abandonment of large areas were, in one way or another, the direct effect of war and occupation: a report by UN Secretary General's special representative, Nils-Göran Gunning,

investigating the reason for these movements concluded that on the Golan, “certain actions authorised or allowed by local military commanders were an important cause of flight”, while on the West Bank, Israel was responsible for acts of intimidation by its army and for attempts to encourage, with loudspeakers, the local populations to cross to the East Bank, suggesting that they would be safer there; similarly, a survey of refugees from the West Bank conducted by researchers of the American University of Beirut found that most of them had left their homes because of the air attacks or direct actions of Israeli troops, including evictions, looting, demolition of houses, round-ups and executions of individuals suspected to be soldiers or guerrilla fighters; in addition, Israel was actively blocking those who attempted to return back to the occupied territories (Bowen, 2004, pp. 349–352).

The other side of the same coin was the Jewish settlement movement emerging with the conquest of new and historically significant land. Although immediately after the war the Israeli leadership favoured and was seriously considering the option of some form of autonomous Palestinian entity on the West Bank (Pedatzur, 1995, pp. 270–275), the 1968 “Allon Plan” laid the ground for the retention and colonisation of the area. Two objectives had to be reconciled: on one hand, Israel’s security demanded the control of the area east of the Jordan River, and on the other, fears of Israel eventually becoming a bi-national state required a careful approach towards the problem of the future of the Palestinian population (Pedatzur, 1995, p. 273).

Israel’s settlement policy was seen as part of the solution to the first problem, namely the creation of secure permanent borders. Central to the whole process was the idea of “creating facts”—especially advocated by Dayan and Galili—that is, consolidating the Israeli presence on areas of strategic and political significance through extensive Jewish colonisation, with the ultimate goal of establishing a permanent right over them in anticipation of external pressures to withdraw from these areas in the context of a possible peace agreement with the Arabs (Lidén, 1979, pp. 128–131). Thus, official settlement plans were drawn within 12 months after the war with priority given to the Golan Heights and the West Jordan Valley, whose strategic position and evacuation of Arab inhabitants made them particularly inviting for an application of the above policy (Harris, 1978, pp. 324–325). Although Jewish settlement of these two areas initially involved only an insubstantial number of people (4,000 until 1977), it nevertheless entailed further complication of Israel’s domestic and international situation, reinforcing the political power of the settlement lobby, diminishing the country’s ability for diplomatic manoeuvre, and inciting Arab anger, without significantly enhancing Israel’s safety.¹¹

4. Conclusion

The 1967 war was one of the briefest in history, yet its consequences were immensely disproportionate to its duration. The debate regarding the degree to which the war was truly a turning point for the Middle East is still unsettled, but the answer depends on the definition of the term. It undoubtedly brought significant change in the strategic outlook of the region—and especially Israel’s security situation, eliminating threats and creating new ones—as well as within the Israeli and Arab societies, fomenting fundamentalism and extremism. It was a decisive moment which, in hindsight, seemingly determined, to a certain extent, the long-term winners of the power struggle in the region, both on the local and international level, establishing Israel and the US as the primary arbiters of its fate. But the term “turning point” implies also a change in direction. In this respect, the 1967 war was just another thrust in the downward slide that still is the Arab-Israeli conflict, just another confirmation of the often self-fulfilling nature of mutual distrust and antagonism. Looking at its enduring consequences from a chronological distance, one can see pre-1967 elements of the regional state of affairs, like Israeli military and political predominance over Palestine, the absence of a Palestinian ethnic state, and the ever fluid interplay between Islamism and Arab nationalism, simply being given additional fuel and the opportunity to consolidate or intensify, rather than a clear shift of developments towards a final resolution of the Arab-Israeli conflict.

Most of the effects of this war were destined to accompany the regional reality for years to come. Five decades later, Israel still enjoys the geostrategic benefits of the Golan Heights and the West Bank—no matter how significant they now are, in light of 21st century military technology and

Israel's nuclear deterrent—as well as the almost unconditional support of the US. The Cold War may have been over for quite some time now and new hostile regional actors have emerged, yet the Middle East is still considered America's backyard. Jewish settlement of the occupied territories continues to influence Israeli politics and the peace process. Arabs still feel disempowered and violated, and a tangible Palestinian national home is nowhere on the horizon. Islamism is no less deeply intertwined with Arab political and cultural practices, and extremism is strong, engaged in a jihad against the West and aspiring to the destruction of Israel. Perhaps a true turning point in the Arab-Israeli conflict has yet to appear.

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Notes

1. Gera (1992, p. 242). Gera goes as far as to argue that without these territories, “the 1973 Arab surprise attack could have meant disaster”.
2. Lidén (1979, p. 117); Dayan had argued that the 1948 borders were not “borders of peace”, while those of 1967 were, and that the situation presented a historically rare opportunity for the revision of borders that Israel should not miss, Elon (2000, p. 27).
3. The psychological impact on Israeli self-assurance in Khalidi (1973, p. 85).
4. Gera (1992, p. 241); Israeli identity in Oren (2003, p. 314) and Bregman (2010, p. 92).
5. Gera (1992, p. 241); on the Gaza Strip in Efrat (2006, pp. 174–175).
6. Oren (2003, pp. 314–315); Elon, (introduction) p. Xi; Gera (1992, p. 235); Moshe Zuckermann argues that although there has always been a religious dimension inherent in the Israeli political culture, it was the 1967 war that allowed it to become an important source of legitimacy and determining factor of the political practice, (1999, pp. 153–155).
7. Halliday speaks of a Soviet “Egypt Syndrome” as equivalent of the American “Vietnam Syndrome”, pp. 119–120.
8. Kass (1978, p. 42, 46); On Syria and Libya in Halliday (2005, p. 120).
9. Halliday (2005, p. 118), Haddad (1992, p. 267); L. Carl Brown argues that if evaluated in terms of its whole duration (i.e. 1952–1970), Nasserism appears moribund much earlier than 1967; the war just hastened its inevitable fall, (1988, pp. 137–138).
10. (Ibid., pp. 272–273); A contrasting view by L. Carl Brown highlights states like Saudi Arabia, Libya, Yemen, Sudan and even dissent inside Egypt, in order to deny that Arab polities generally embraced secularism, claiming that the 1967 war added nothing to Muslim fundamentalism either in terms of motivation for action or ideological depth, pp. 139–140.
11. Ibid., pp. 328–329; the minimal contribution of the settlement to Israel's security in Elon, who argues that the Golan Heights, for example, imposed an additional security burden during the 1973 war, (introduction) p. xv22.

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